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**Second Salisbury Rowan-United Summit to Engage Community in
Prevention and Intervention Support for Safe Community**
***Summit Follow Up to Focus on 8 Key Areas Identified by Community as
Deterrents to Youth Violence and Gang Participation***

Salisbury, NC_October 12, 2007 – Salisbury Mayor Susan Kluttz announces that preparations are currently underway for a second community-wide summit entitled, ***Salisbury-Rowan United II: The Next Steps in Creating an Action Agenda for a Safer Community and a Positive Future for our Youth.*** The informational and interactive public session will be held on Thursday, November 29th at 6:30 pm at the Salisbury Civic Center, 315 S. Boundary Street and serve as a follow-up to the initial summit held in June of this year. All citizens of Salisbury/Rowan are cordially invited to attend and continue sharing their own distinct ideas and creative solutions.

The initial summit, held at two locations, drew a crowd of over 500 attendees. Mayor Kluttz shares, “Through interactive summit feedback sessions, these dedicated citizens offered innovative ideas and novel suggestions for positive youth intervention. This invaluable source of information has been compiled and utilized to create a community-wide action agenda for deterring youth violence and gang participation. Our November follow-up summit will uplift these eight areas which our citizen input has identified as specific areas for community focus. They are: Teen Employment Opportunities: Jobs, Jobs Training and Higher Education, Mentoring and Tutoring, Recreational Programs, Faith Based Community Support, Parental Involvement, Support for Schools and School Programs, Law Enforcement, and Community Awareness. We encourage all citizens to attend ***Salisbury-Rowan United II: The Next Steps***, as we offer information regarding these eight specific areas, provide increased awareness for their existing programs for youth and share program specifics through on-site personnel.”

“**Next Steps**” will continue the tradition, as established in the previous summit, of joining City and County Resources. The evening program will offer welcome remarks to attendees by both Mayor Susan Kluttz and County Commission Chairman Arnold Chamberlain. Fountainworks President Warren Miller, master facilitator for the summit held in June, will follow by sharing the process through which citizen input was captured, compiled and utilized to create the action agenda. Miller will also walk through the “Next Steps” process with attendees and highlight examples of community intervention and prevention work which is currently underway throughout the community. Representative

staff from local agencies will be recognized and their respective roles in the Action Agenda process will be shared. Salisbury Police Chief Mark Wilhelm will offer insight into local gang activity and introduce members of his newly expanded Salisbury Police Gangs Unit. The larger task force is the product of a \$260,000 budget allocation, unanimously approved by the Salisbury City Council for 2007-2008. Following the informational segment of the program, attendees will have the opportunity to visit booth displays and speak with representatives from each of the eight, identified target areas.

Police Chief Mark Wilhelm, pleased with the community's commitment to the first summit, hopes that citizens will return for the follow-up session to see the results of their input. Wilhelm notes, "We are looking for an increased awareness and participation for existing programs and mentoring venues while offering a sense of belonging for our youth. These areas which our community has identified, offer constructive and preventative community activities and provide alternatives to gang involvement." Wilhelm shares that the Salisbury Police Department has comprehensive educational programs which are consistently shared with students, K-12. In addition, over 40,000 complimentary gang awareness and violence prevention booklets for youth and adults are being printed at this time and will be distributed locally over the next six months. "We are extremely thankful to our booklet sponsors for their dedication in providing a safer community for all. It is through generous donations and grant funding from Wal-Mart, Food Lion, Beaver Brothers Heating and Air, Rowan Regional, KKA Architecture, Chamberlain Exterminating, F&M, and The Robertson Foundation, that we are able to provide awareness materials for all ages." To receive these complimentary publications which will be available for pick-up in December, please contact Karen Wilkinson, Public Information and Communications Manager, at 704-638-2113.

Mayor Kluttz shares that for those unable to attend the follow-up summit, an opportunity to share new suggestions and ideas is available by visiting the Salisbury-Rowan United website at www.salisburync.gov/positiveyouth. The site offers action agenda updates, local news reports and an email link for citizens to share input with the Mayor and City Council. Mayor Kluttz states, "We continue to receive wonderful feedback from our citizens and appreciate their support and dedication to this community-wide issue which plagues the entire nation. The action agenda has truly been created through direct feedback from our citizens. By taking the "Next Steps" together, we can provide a positive future for our youth. I sincerely encourage everyone in Salisbury-Rowan to attend the November 29th event."

Mayor Kluttz shares Project SAFE Salisbury will hold its second Family Day event on Saturday, December 8th. The event will feature a holiday theme and include free photo opportunities with Santa. Family Day, which serves as a positive intervention and prevention program for kids (grades K-5) will take place at the Salisbury YMCA from 9 am – 1 pm. The agenda will be similar in format to the August event which drew nearly 1,000 participants. Lt. Rory Collins, Project SAFE Program Director for the Salisbury Police Department offers, "These community events provide a positive venue for our citizens and create increased awareness for affirmative youth outlets. Children are currently being targeted for gang activity at a very young age and by involving children in positive and productive roles, we can potentially deter their involvement in future gang activity." Project Safe Neighborhoods is a federally funded program, created to reduce violent gun crime by partnering volunteer citizens with law enforcement. Past violent offenders are notified that their crimes must stop and those willing to change their ways are assisted with available resources. Those offenders that do not heed the warnings by

local law enforcement officials and accept community support will receive the maximum allowable sentence for future crimes. For more information regarding Project SAFE Salisbury, visit www.salisburync.gov/projectsafe/safesalisbury.htm .

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